



Florence Catherine Gilmartin

February 11, 1926 - November 6, 2014

Florence Catherine Gilmartin entered this world in 1926 and four years later was orphaned, along with her 2-year old brother Eddie when their mother, Jessie, died tragically at the tender age of 23. She and “Brother,” as Flo called him, were raised by aunts and uncles in the poor, working-class Irish neighborhood of Laurel Hill, near Maspeth in Queens, New York.

Times were hard during the Great Depression and “Flo” quit school after the 8th grade to pursue a job at the sheet music store where her mother had worked; she wanted to know some of her mother’s coworkers to know more about her Mom. She got to know some of them and one of them gave her the only picture she ever had of her mother.

She was engaged to the love of her life, Gene “Gil” Gilmartin, during World War Two. Gil was one of the casualties of that conflict, being totally and permanently blinded in the last week of the war in August, 1945. Despite their tragedy, Florence and Gil were married in November of that year and had a loving marriage of thirty-two years.

Florence and Gil were a great team. Their union produced eight sons. Florence worked at the telephone company as an operator, and Gil ran the household. None of the Gilmartin boys lacked for love or attention from either of them. The household was always boisterous and active and featured

spirited discussions and much laughter.

In the 1950's Florence was able to get her job as a telephone operator transferred to Sanford, Florida and packed up their then five sons, her husband and a seeing-eye dog in a 1954 Mercury station wagon and headed South.

A devout Roman Catholic, Florence ensured that her sons would be active in Sanford's All Souls Catholic Church. Mass was every Sunday and Novenas occurred with regularity. Every Sunday the Gilmartin clan filled almost an entire pew at morning Mass. Five of the Gilmartin boys became altar boys at All Souls and most attended All Souls Catholic School.

Life was not without adversity. Florence and Gil suffered the death of 16-year old Paul who was killed by a drunk driver and a few years later, the tragic drowning death of 4-year old Richard sent them reeling. But they weathered the storm with love, affection and action. Florence started the All Soul's Sharing Center. She put her heart and soul into the endeavor and it grew and eventually became the Christian Sharing Center in Sanford.

In the seventies both Gil and Flo pursued their GED certificate. They took the classes together, she taking notes for both of them and they both passed. Then, at the age of 54, with Gil having passed away, she decided to get a college degree. When asked by someone why she went to college at 54 she said, "if my sons can do it, so can I." Typical of most adventures in her life, Florence excelled in her studies and graduated from Seminole Community College and then completed her degree as a Media Specialist at the University of Central Florida.

Florence, as was typical, did not rest on her laurels. She then taught at All Souls Catholic School for several years, working in the library as a media

specialist. She also plunged back into her volunteer work with the church, taking on various and sundry tasks, at least once being awarded the title of Volunteer of the Year.

As time passed she was presented with 12 grandchildren and a name change; she became Nana and thoroughly enjoyed her new role.

Florence passed away on Thursday, November 6, 2014 with family in attendance. Florence was predeceased by her husband Gil and sons Paul, Richard and Brian. She is survived by sons Danny, Gene, Mike, Billy and Patrick, 12 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Viewing will be Wednesday, November 12 from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Sanford-Brisson Chapel, 905 Laurel Ave, in Sanford and the Funeral Mass will be held at All Souls Catholic Church Historic Chapel, 800 S. Oak Ave., at 10 a.m. on Thursday, November, 13, in Sanford.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **12**. 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM (ET)

DeGusipe Funeral Home & Crematory Sanford Chapel

905 Laurel Ave

Sanford, FL 32771

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<https://www.degusipefuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

JM

“ I am so very sorry to hear of Florence's passing. I met Florence online through her genealogy hobby when she reached out to me, a relative (2nd cousins) my grandfather was Florence's grand-uncle. I met Florence in person in 2005 - she was the first person I went to visit immediately after I moved to Florida. She was a wonderful person and I feel that my life has been enriched by having known her. We spoke many times over those years and I will miss her greatly. My sincere condolences to her family whom I know she loved very much.

John McVay - December 27, 2014 at 07:05 AM

PC

“ I remember the Gilmartin family well. My mom taught at All Souls for several years and taught several of the boys. I remember Mr. Gilmartin's whistles & the boys stopping what they were doing to see if he was whistling for one of them. Both Florence & her husband were deeply involved in every aspect of their sons' lives... From Boy Scouts to the CYO to alter boys etc. she will be in my prayers.
Peggy Nolte Crepeau

Peggy Nolte Crepeau - November 12, 2014 at 04:01 PM



“ Healing Tears - Blue and White was purchased for the family of Florence Catherine Gilmartin.



November 11, 2014 at 01:31 PM

JG

“ It has been many years since I last stopped to see Mrs. Gilmartin and we talked for an hour about Sanford, All Souls and of course her sons. I remember Mr Gilmartin would whistle starting at one blast for Danny and then each son would listen and count to see if they were who he wanted. I felt very blessed when he assigned me a number of whistles. I will surely miss her.

Jim Glenn

James Glenn - November 11, 2014 at 12:17 PM

CM

“ My fond memory of Mrs. Gilmartin was when she and her husband volunteered their home to a (1962) CYO spaghetti dinner and dance. The Gilmartin family prepared a good dinner for about 20 teenagers and when dinner was done, moved all the furniture against the walls of their home so we could dance in the living and dining room. I remember Mr. and Mrs. Gilmartin in the kitchen dancing to one song. Mrs Gilmartin always had a smile and hello for everyone, was the mother of my classmate Gene and a woman who gave so much of herself to others. She will be missed. Carolyn Rogero Mettelmann

Carolyn Rogero Mettelmann - November 10, 2014 at 09:11 PM

AB

“ Florence will be greatly missed! She enhanced the lives of all she met. I was with her when our priest came to give her The Last Viaticum. When he walked into the room it was like Florence had seen the face of Jesus. She literally glowed! I will always remember her as a kind and gentle woman. I witnessed her walking over a mile with her walker to bring food to the parish office for a needy family as recent as last year.
I love you Florence!!!

Angie Bryant - November 10, 2014 at 11:26 AM

KP

“ 1 file added to the album *Florence Gilmartin*



Kim Peters - November 08, 2014 at 06:54 PM

KP

“ 1 file added to the album *Florence Gilmartin*



Kim Peters - November 08, 2014 at 06:36 PM